

City of Northampton, MA
Transportation and Parking Commission

January 21, 2020

MEETING MINUTES

Submitted by: Beth A. Kaplowitt

1. DPW Director Donna LaScaleia called the meeting to order at 4:03 p.m. and announced that there would be audio/video recording of this meeting.

Members present and absent/introductions:

Member	Present	Time if arriving late or leaving early
Donna LaScaleia, DPW Director, Chair	X	
Jody Kasper, Chief of Police, Vice Chair	X	
Wayne Feiden, Director of Planning and Sustainability	Absent	
Nanci Forrestall, Parking Enforcement Administrator	X	
Jim Nash, City Council Vice President	X	
Karen Foster, Ward 2 City Councilor	X	
Debin Bruce, Citizen	X	
Gary Hartwell, Citizen	X	
Adam Novitt, Citizen	Absent	
Jami Albro-Fisher, Citizen	Absent	
Advisor	Present	Time if arriving late or leaving early
Maggie Chan, DPW Traffic Engineer	Absent	
Staff	Present	Time if arriving late or leaving early
Beth A. Kaplowitt, DPW Clerk	X	

2. Public comment

- Marc O'Neil of Ware, MA works in Northampton and offered his observations of traffic versus pedestrian issues that he has noticed in the City. He will email Councilor Nash videos that illustrate some of his comments.

3. Approval of minutes from the previous meeting

Motion:	Motion by:	Second:	Vote:
To approve the minutes from the November 19, 2019 meeting.	Gary Hartwell	Debin Bruce	Yes, 7 No, 0 Abstain, 0

4. Reports from departments and subcommittees/announcements/presentations

- TPC Committee Changes - Chair Donna LaScaleia:
 - The Mayor has made some structural changes to the TPC Committee:

- ❖ Nanci Forrestall is now a voting member of the Committee;
- ❖ Donna LaScaleia is now the Chair of the Committee;
- ❖ Jody Kasper is now the Vice Chair of the Committee;
- ❖ Maggie Chan is now the only advisor to the Committee;
- ❖ Ward 2 Councilor Karen Foster is now a member of the Committee.
- There are changes to the Traffic Calming (TC) process being made:
 - ❖ The intention is to reduce the backlog of pending TC applications;
 - ❖ One or two will be addressed each month;
 - ❖ Outreach will be done to the original applicant(s) to let them know the status of the application and how the DPW plans to proceed.
- Department of Public Works (DPW) Updates - Director Donna LaScaleia
 - Paving Projects
 - ❖ The DPW is preparing proposals for projects to be done this summer and working to get them out to bid now;
 - ❖ West Farms Road and North Maple Street will be the primary focus.
- Debin Bruce:
 - Regarding the Main Street project, the Planning office formed a loose committee to discuss the Toole Engineering proposal. The discussion centered on the definition of the project area. Further conversation in future meetings will include project scope and emphasis.

5. Matters before the Commission

- a. Proposed Ordinance Relative to Parking on Bridge Street
 - Director LaScaleia gave a verbal summary of the proposed Ordinance, and read into the record an email from a resident which addressed the topic;
 - Councilor Nash provided a written document detailing the results of the outreach that he did to businesses and individuals in the affected area, and gave a verbal summary of his findings;
 - There was a discussion about the possibility of adding an amendment to the motion on the floor making the first six parking spaces short term, and the remaining eight parking spaces long term, but members felt that leaving the motion as is with all the spaces designated long term would provide the most flexibility and allow for adequate turnover.

Motion:	Motion by:	Second:	Vote:
To send 19.XXX An Ordinance Relative to Parking on Bridge Street to City Council with a positive recommendation.	Jody Kasper	Jim Nash	Yes, 7 No, 0 Abstain, 0

- b. Proposed Ordinance Relative to Parking on Pleasant Street
 - Director LaScaleia gave a verbal summary of the proposed Ordinance, and read into the record emails from two residents which addressed the topic;
 - There was a discussion about the potential elimination of two parking spaces which when occupied, restrict visibility for drivers exiting the parking lot at 351 Pleasant Street. Chief Kasper strongly supports this, as there have been a number of accidents in this very dangerous area;

- Councilor Nash requested that the feasibility and necessity of designating an additional Handicapped parking space further out on Pleasant Street be evaluated. This was referred to the DPW, which will confer with Parking;
- There was a discussion which included the possibility of making two of the proposed meters two hour meters, but ultimately the motion was voted on as is, as members felt that designating all of the spaces long term would provide the most flexibility and allow for adequate turnover.

Motion:	Motion by:	Second:	Vote:
To send 19.XXX An Ordinance Relative to Parking on Pleasant Street to City Council with a positive recommendation.	Donna LaScaleia	Jody Kasper	Yes, 6 No, 0 Abstain, 1

- c. Discussion of traffic and pedestrian safety at the intersection of New South Street, Main Street, Elm Street, West Street, and State Street
 - Director LaScaleia requested that this item be added to the Agenda. The DPW, the Police Department and the Mayor's office have all received complaints that cars turning right from Elm Street onto New South Street concurrent with pedestrians crossing there creates a very dangerous situation;
 - Director LaScaleia said that a redesign of Main Street is being looked at by Toole Design for 2025, so with that in mind, the TPC might consider what can be done now to address the problem;
 - Director LaScaleia said that most major cities have both exclusive and concurrent (used if long traffic delays would occur if exclusive was maintained) traffic phases. A Leading Pedestrian Interval (LPI) of three seconds was set at this crosswalk last summer (this gives pedestrians a three second head start going into the crossing to increase their visibility to drivers) and has received positive feedback;
 - Director LaScaleia said that increasing the LPI here to six or seven seconds is being considered on a trial basis. The concern is that it might create significant traffic congestion.
- d. Discussion of intersection of Pine Street and Maple Street
 - Director LaScaleia changed the order of items 5. d) and 5. e) on the Agenda;
 - There is a Traffic Calming Application for this intersection that was submitted some time ago and which has recently been updated;
 - The DPW commissioned an engineering study by Fuss & O'Neill. They have completed the data-gathering as part of a study of several intersections. The firm's report should be submitted soon, and should give ideas about how best to improve this intersection.
- e. Ward 3 truck update by Councilor Nash
 - Bridge Strike Report & Truck Restriction in GPS
 - ❖ Councilor Nash prepared a Bridge Strike Report regarding the ongoing problem of trucks striking the railroad bridge on Main Street. He used input from carriers, constituents, the Coca-Cola Company, MassDOT and the Northampton Police Department;
 - ❖ There was a discussion regarding ways to reduce the numbers of strikes including establishing a truck exclusion zone for the Bridge Street corridor, ways to have commercial trucking GPS navigations systems updated and used effectively by truck drivers, and enhanced signage that factors in road fatigue;

- ❖ Councilor Nash will continue to research this topic and come back to TPC in the future with an update.

6. New Business

- None.

7. Adjourned at 5:40 p.m.

Motion	Motion by:	Second:	Vote:
Adjourn.	Debin Bruce	Jody Kasper	Yes, 7 No, 0 Abstain, 0